

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: 6/1/08
	Section 11: Parental Interaction and Involvement	Version: 1

POLICY: NEW

OLD POLICY: 404.2

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will encourage and support the maximum amount of interaction and involvement that is appropriate between the parent/guardian/custodian given the need for child safety and well-being, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

Note: Visitation is only one component of parental interaction. See related information for explanation of interaction and involvement also. See separate policies, [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#), and [8.13 Implementing the Visitation Plan](#).

Code References

N/A

PROCEDURE

In conjunction with the development of the Visitation Plan the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Facilitate the convening of the Child and Family Team (CFT) to determine an appropriate level of parent/guardian/custodian interaction and the corresponding level of involvement. See separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#).
2. Assure that the child, parent/guardian/custodian, resource family, and CFT members understand the maximum allowable parent/guardian/custodian interaction and involvement. [See matrix, page 2 of this policy](#).
3. Document the visitation plan in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS).
 - a. Reassess the level of interaction and involvement based upon the effects on the child.
 - b. Reconvene the CFT, if the plan needs to be changed based upon the reassessment. See separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

RELATED INFORMATION

What is Interaction?

Visitation is what often comes to mind when people talk about **interaction** between the parent/guardian/custodian and the child; however, visitation is only one component of interaction. Interaction can be many things (e.g., phone calls, emails, letters; an exchange of meaningful items like drawings, photographs and gifts; etc.). These other forms of interaction take on increased significance if face-to-face contact is not regular or consistent.

What is Involvement?

The affect of a parent/guardian/custodian's **involvement** in his/her child life is very critical to the well-being of a child during an out-of-home placement. Examples of involvement include making important decisions about the child's:

1. Health care,
2. Education,
3. Extracurricular activities,
4. Hair length and styles,
5. Attendance at medical appointments,
6. School case conferences, and
7. Participation in CFT.

A parent who is not allowed any interaction with his/her child (e.g., no visits, no phone calls, no letters) may still be involved through one or more of the examples given above.

The following matrix provides guidance regarding the levels of interaction and corresponding level of involvement:

Interaction Level	Parent/Guardian/Custodian and Child Interaction Description	Involvement Level
HIGH	Frequent face-to-face contact and other forms of contact between the parent/guardian/custodian and the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unsupervised attendance at child's health care appointments, hair appointments, school meetings and extracurricular events.• Making decisions regarding the child's education and extracurricular activities.
MEDIUM	Supervised face-to-face contact and other forms of contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervised attendance at the child's health care appointments, hair appointments, school meetings and extracurricular events.• Making decisions regarding the child's education and extracurricular activities.

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Interaction Level	Parent/Guardian/Custodian and Child Interaction Description	Involvement Level
LOW	<p>Parent/guardian/custodian interaction is limited to activities that do not involve face-to-face contact with the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited supervised visits may be allowed depending on situation. • Letters, photographs, gifts, etc. • Phone calls may or may not be allowed depending on situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement does not include face-to-face contact; however, the parent/guardian/custodian continues to have the right to make decisions regarding the child's education and extra-curricular activities.
None	<p>The parent/guardian/custodian and child have no form of contact. Usually reserved for cases of extreme maltreatment where DCS is pursuing Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).</p> <p>Note: TPR does not always mean there will be no contact, this is determined by the court.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement does not include face-to-face contact, however the parent/guardian/custodian continues to have the right to make decisions regarding the child's education and extra-curricular activities